



MAYOR GINA-LOUISE SCIARRA

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Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School Trustees Vote To Host Northampton's Animal Control Facility on SVAHS Campus

NORTHAMPTON – Today, Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra announced an agreement between the City of Northampton and Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School (SVAHS) to locate the proposed Animal Control Facility on the SVAHS campus. At this location, the facility will enjoy a partnership with Smith Vocational's Animal Science Program. The recently acquired Cooke Avenue location will be retained by the city for access to Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway and the city will dedicate land for between two and four affordable or mixed affordable and market housing.

"The Smith Vocational campus has long been a discussed location for the Animal Control Facility. When I took over this project as mayor, it was still not a possibility. Recent changes at SVAHS opened up the conversation again. I am thrilled that not only is it an ideal spot because it's centrally located and there are no nearby residences, it also pairs synergistically with the planned Companion Animal Concentration," said Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra. "While we were excited at the prospect of the former Moose Lodge location because of the added benefit of securing access and maintaining parking for a key conservation area of the Broad Brook-Fitzgerald Lake Greenway, we're grateful to the SVAHS Trustees and Smith Vocational Superintendent Dr. Andrew Linkenhoker for this even better opportunity."

Superintendent Linkenhoker reached out to Mayor Sciarra shortly after the City Council voted to approve the Cooke Avenue location at the former Moose Lodge property with an offer to reopen discussions on locating the facility at SVAHS instead.

"The pieces all fell into place at the right time. After working on it for years, we're ready to offer a companion animals program, we've got a spot for it on campus, and some land next to it that will be perfect for the much-needed Animal Control Facility," shared Smith Vocational and Agricultural High School Superintendent Linkenhoker. "I'm grateful that the Trustees agreed that this will be another great way we can partner with the city."

SVAHS Trustee Chair Michael Cahillane noted, "Smith Vocational has long been a strong partner for Northampton. The Trustees are pleased that we were able to provide the best option for the city and demonstrate the value of vocational study to the community in new ways."

Ward One City Councilor Stanley Moulton, who represents the neighborhood surrounding the former Moose Lodge, praised the mayor and SVAHS trustees for agreeing on this more ideal location for the animal control facility. "This is a win-win-win solution because it addresses a long-identified need for the city, provides an educational opportunity for SVAHS students, and responds to concerns raised by residents in the neighborhood of the Moose Lodge," Moulton said.

The city will begin planning the construction of the animal control facility immediately. The Cooke Avenue location sale was also finalized today, and has been added to the city's inventory of land designated for affordable housing. The city is moving forward on plans to demolish the old Moose Lodge building.

For more information, contact the Mayor's Office at 413-587-1249 or mayor@northamptonma.gov.